

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Kindly amend the claims as follows:

1. (currently amended) A positioning stage, comprising:

a base having a first rail on ~~its~~ a top surface of said base;
a first table slidable along said first rail and having a second rail
perpendicular to said first rail on ~~its~~ top surface of said first table;
a first joint freely movable together with said first table toward said first rail
relative to said base;
a first clutch for fixing said first joint to said base or releasing ~~it~~ said first
joint from said base;
first forcibly-moving means for moving said first table toward said first rail
relative to said first joint;
a second table slidable along said second rail;
a second joint freely movable together with said second table toward said
second rail relative to said first rail;
a second clutch for fixing said second joint to said first table or releasing ~~it~~ said second joint from said first table; and
a second forcibly-moving means for moving said second table toward said
second rail relative to said second joint, wherein at least one of said first
and second forcibly-moving means comprise a screw mechanism for fine
adjustment of a table position.

2. (original) The positioning stage according to Claim 1, wherein said first table
is moved toward said first rail relative to said base by said first forcibly-
moving means when said first clutch secures said first joint to said base,
while said second table is moved toward said second rail relative to said

first table by said second forcibly-moving means when said second clutch secures said second joint to said first table.

3. (original) The positioning stage according to Claim 2, wherein said first table becomes freely slidable relative to said base when said first clutch releases said first joint from said base, while said second table becomes freely slidable relative to said first table when said second clutch releases said second joint from said first table.
4. (currently amended) The positioning stage according to Claim 3, wherein said base comprises a plate parallel to said first rail on its top surface, said first clutch comprises a first clamping mechanism for clamping said plate,
said first table comprises a plate parallel to said second rail on ~~its~~ a top surface of said first table, and
said second clutch comprises a second clamping mechanism for clamping said plate.
5. (currently amended) The positioning stage according to Claim 4, wherein said first joint comprises a first female screw thread,
said first forcibly-moving means comprises a first male screw threaded into said first female screw thread,
said second joint comprises a second female screw thread, and
said second forcibly-moving means comprises a second male screw threaded into said second female screw thread.
6. (withdrawn) The positioning stage according to Claim 5, wherein said first clutch comprises a first clutch driving means,

a first switch for driving said first clutch driving means is provided on an outer peripheral surface of a base, a first table or a second table, said second clutch comprises a second clutch driving means, a second switch for driving said second clutch driving means is provided on an outer peripheral surface of the base, the first table or the second table.

7. (withdrawn) The positioning stage according to Claim 6, comprising:
 - a driving means for sliding said first table along said first rail; and
 - a driving means for sliding said second table along said second rail.
8. (withdrawn) The positioning stage according to Claim 6, wherein said first joint and said first clutch are built into said first table, and said second joint and said second clutch are built into said second table.
9. (currently amended) A positioning stage, comprising:
 - a base having a rail on ~~its~~ a top surface of said base;
 - a table slidable along said rail;
 - a joint freely movable together with said table toward said rail relative to said base;
 - a clutch for fixing said joint to said base or releasing ~~it~~ said joint from said base; and
 - forcibly-moving means for moving said table toward said rail relative to said joint, wherein said forcibly-moving means comprises a screw mechanism for fine adjustment of a table position.
